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# The Agricultural Instruction Bill

SPEECH DELIVERED BY

The HON. MARTIN BURRELL

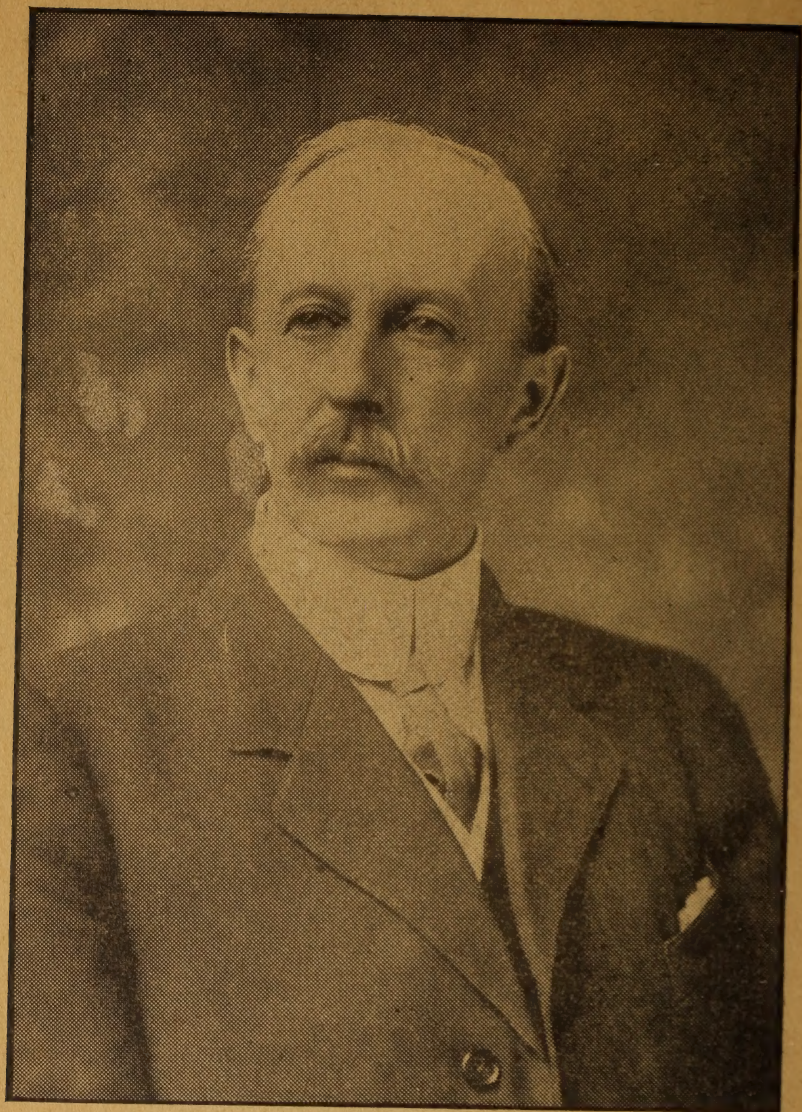


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HON. MARTIN BURRELL



# The Agricultural Instruction Act

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On January 17th, the Honourable Martin Burrell gave notice of the following proposed Resolution:—

“Resolved. That it is expedient to provide that a sum “not exceeding \$10,000,000 be appropriated and paid out “of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada during the “period of ten years, beginning with the year ending “March 31st, 1914, for the purpose of aiding and advancing the Farming Industry by instruction in Agriculture, “including the work carried on by Veterinary Colleges.”

On January 24th the Resolution was reported and agreed to, and Mr. Burrell thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 103 for the granting of aid for the advancement of Agricultural Instruction in the provinces, speaking as follows:—

Mr. Speaker, the right honourable gentleman who now leads this House (Mr. Borden) stated to the people of Canada on August 14, 1911, that if he were placed in charge of the Government of the country he would provide for “the granting of liberal assistance to the provinces for the purpose of supplementing and extending the work of agricultural education, and for the improvement of agriculture.” The Bill which I am asking leave to introduce is intended to be a prompt and complete fulfilment of that promise.

When introducing a measure for the assistance of agriculture last session, I pointed out that it was impossible to move wisely in such a matter without first having a thorough investigation of the whole subject made by a com-

petent man, and in appointing Dr. C. C. James for this purpose the Government felt they were taking the right step in the direction of a constructive agricultural programme. Since that time Dr. James, whose long experience in agricultural matters and whose wide acquaintance with the men who in Canada are solving agricultural problems peculiarly fitted him for the work, has freely and fully consulted with the various provincial governments and with the men in charge of the various agricultural institutions of the country. His task has been to ascertain in what way the federal authorities could best assist the provinces in strengthening and developing Canada's great basic industry. I have been in constant touch with Dr. James during the past year, and I gladly here bear testimony to the valuable character of his services. It has been customary to follow investigations such as this, or of other kinds, by elaborate reports, more or less valuable, which too often have found a long resting place in the pigeon hole of a department—unacted upon, “unwept, unhonoured and unsung.” There is a homely old proverb that “the proof of the pudding is in the eating,” and the result of the work which has been carried on and of the careful thought given to the study of this whole question will be found in the terms of the Bill which I have the honour to introduce to the House.

There has been in the Speech from the Throne a reference to the form which such a measure should take, viz., such assistance to agricultural education as would involve continuity of action, and already there have come to me from the principals of the leading Canadian universities, from the heads of agricultural institutions, and from men holding office in various provincial governments, both Liberal and Conservative, many expressions of sympathetic interest in and approval of the suggested line of action.

It is not necessary in this day and hour to defend or justify generous assistance to agriculture. We all recognize the soundness of such a doctrine. To increase the farmers' output; to improve the conditions of rural life; to swell the numbers of those who till the fields,—to do these things,



even in the very attempting of them, we are doing something to solve the greatest problems and avert many of the manifest evils that face us in modern life.

## TWO PROBLEMS

Two problems especially confront us to-day, as they confront other nations: the ever-increasing cost of living, with its heavy burdens, and the increase of urban as against rural population. To analyze their cause is not less difficult than to provide their remedy. Free trade England is not less afflicted in this respect than countries with protective tariffs. The two things are intimately related. Congestion in cities is both an economic and a social menace. The swelling of urban population with a diminution in the ranks of the producers has its sequence in the added cost of living, in the increase of squalor, hunger and crime, and, —in a country to which thousands of immigrants come— in the concentration of large masses of the foreign born, who, when unassimilated and unrelated to our national life, constitute both a political and social difficulty.

In the United States prior to the civil war the urban population was twelve per cent. In 1900 it rose to 31 per cent. To-day it stands at the ominous figure of 46 per cent. In Canada we take a natural pride in our great and growing cities, but we should be poor citizens if we did not try to mitigate and avert the attendant evils which follow undesirable expansion in this direction, and it should be noted that in 1901 Canada's urban population was 37.6 per cent, and in 1911 it had risen to 45.5 per cent.

As this question is so intimately related to the purposes and objects of the Bill, I shall venture to give the House the facts and figures as they relate to Canada.

Total population—

1901.....	5,371,315
1911.....	7,204,838
Increase, 34.13 per cent.	

	*Eastern Canada.	†Western Canada.
Total population—		
1901.....	4,725,798	645,517
1911.....	5,463,941	1,740,897
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Increase.....	738,143	1,095,380
Per cent.....	16.	170.
Urban population—		
1901.....	1,813,832	207,967
1911.....	2,599,228	681,216
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Increase.....	785,396	473,249
Per cent.....	43.3	227.
Rural population—		
1901.....	2,911,966	437,550
1911.....	2,864,713	1,059,681
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Decrease.....	47,253	622,131
Per cent.....	1.6	149.

\* Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

† Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, etc.

It will be noted that the significant fact in these figures is that in spite of the great increase in the rural population of Western Canada there is still a much greater increase in the urban population.

If this process goes on indefinitely where will it land us? Into what danger shall we be plunged? Hunger and want in big cities are tragic enough, but neither so tragic, nor so pitiful as would be deserted fields and a barren countryside. There can be no health in the cities without corre-



sponding health in the country. To put it in George W. Russell's words: "Our princes and captains of industry with all they control—the high built factories and titanic mills—might all disappear without man disappearing, but cut away man from the fields and fruits of the earth and in six months there will be silence in the streets."

### CREATION OF RURAL CIVILIZATION.

We, then, in this Parliament who are making the laws of the nation may well ask ourselves: in what way can we best solve these questions of great national concern? It will not be denied that the safe-guarding of its productive classes is a matter of primary and fundamental importance to the nation. But in regard to the agricultural life of our country it is not alone a betterment of economic conditions that we should aim at, but something finer—the creation of a rural civilization which will at once ensure a fuller and happier life to those in its midst, and prove a source and fount of strength to the state itself.

In so far as this Federal Government is concerned, we have come to the conclusion that we can best help on this great work by freely and generously assisting the cause of agricultural education. If we are told that this is an innovation, we answer that it is the people's money, drawn from them, and that it is not only defensible but desirable that such money should be spent in what we believe to be the most efficient way to attain the objects referred to. In choosing education or instruction as a desirable line which federal expenditure should take we are following the best methods of the most progressive countries. Practically no advance was made in agriculture in the great German nation until the system of secondary and elementary agricultural instruction was organized during the second half of the last century. At the present time in Germany there is no branch of agricultural production for which special facilities for instruction are not provided, and the world knows the results.

## THE WORK IN GREAT BRITAIN.

As to Great Britain the House is aware of the marvellous work of regeneration carried on in Ireland through the Board of Agriculture organized in 1899. Sir Horace Plunkett was its moving spirit. Instruction for the farmers and co-operation were the means then adopted and still carried on so successfully. In 1909 the British Parliament set aside £500,000 a year for five years to give further assistance in England, Scotland and Ireland to agriculture, roads and fisheries. With these funds the Development Commission has been assisting agricultural colleges, encouraging many lines of direct instruction and providing for agricultural research.

Denmark is frequently referred to as the most progressive and most prosperous of purely agricultural countries. After being shorn of her rich southern provinces by Prussia, the Danish people determined to make a supreme effort to regain their former position and they have done so through two allied lines of work—co-operation and education.

## BELGIUM'S AGRICULTURAL POSITION.

In Belgium, depletion of soil and emigration of rural population became so serious that the Government in 1885 decided to appoint agricultural supervisors or district agricultural instructors. What has been the result? Briefly it may be summed up thus—increased values of farm lands, remarkable improvement in crop production and a steadying of the rural population. The Belgian Minister of Agriculture reports that since 1885:

Bushels.

Wheat has increased per acre from . . . . .	24.54 to 28.55
Rye has increased per acre from . . . . .	23.86 to 36.69
Oats has increased per acre from . . . . .	49.79 to 81.48
Barley has increased per acre from . . . . .	38.25 to 57.57



Mr. R. B. Greig in a special report to the Board of Education in England points out that:

“ Belgian farms produce 50,000,000 dollars more annually than they did twenty-five years ago at a cost for every kind of agricultural education of not more than 200,000 dollars a year. What is now the densest population in Europe is almost supported by the product of its own farms, which yield an average of 100 dollars per annum per acre as compared with less than half from British land.”

#### \$500,000,000 MORE IN FRANCE.

France for many years has been carrying on a well planned and comprehensive scheme of agricultural instruction. I cannot sum up the results better than in the following words from a recent issue of a Canadian weekly journal, the Weekly Sun of the 20th of November, 1912:

#### VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

“ If anyone doubts the value of agricultural education when carried directly to the home, the barn and the field of the farmer, he should consider the case of France. Since that country established a practical system of agricultural education fifteen years ago the value of the annual crops has increased by five hundred million dollars.”

#### \$68,000,000 FOR THE STATES.

I would like to point out to the House a notable advance made recently by the United States, and especially because their problems of federal and state jurisdiction are not unlike our own.

Since 1862 Congress has passed six Acts providing for grants to the states for agricultural colleges, experiment

stations and various lines of agricultural instruction. During the past fifty years no less than \$68,000,000 has been turned over to the states for agricultural investigation and instruction. These grants still continue, but they are now inadequate for the demands of carrying instruction direct to the farms and increased appropriations are required.

Last year the introduction of the Page Bill marked a new departure in their attitude to the national question of agriculture. The Page Bill, now in its final stage, provides appropriations approximating twelve million dollars per annum to be apportioned among the states largely for agricultural work but including also technical training. In dealing with this Bill the New York State authorities remarked:

"It is recommended that in the development of federal efforts to promote agricultural education the autonomy of the states should be preserved; that established state policies should not be reversed by federal legislation; and that a single centralized control over all states which would lead to bureaucratic regulations should be avoided."

It is added that in the policy adopted, of providing federal funds for agricultural work in the states, the different states should have the same liberty in the application of these funds to the purposes named as they had in the use of their own funds. In the working out of their proposals there is to be co-operation between the state, the state colleges and the federal authorities.

In Canada it is equally desirable that there should be somewhat similar co-operation. We, of course, propose to develop what we may call the direct work of the federal department by assisting and developing the live stock, dairying, fruit growing and other industries along lines of investigation, research, improvement in transportation, markets, and so on, but in respect to funds applied to education we propose to follow what may fairly be termed constitutional lines, using and strengthening the machinery already existing in the provinces, or by them properly established.



## NEED OF MEN.

The crying need in this country is for men—men who are eminently fitted and trained to teach others. At present in our search for such men we are pursuing the old plan of “robbing Peter to pay Paul,” and there is a continual transfer of the good men from agricultural colleges to departments of agriculture and from the departments back again to the colleges or to other departments. The harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few. It is in a sense one of the great encouragements and one of the proofs of the earnest spirit animating our people at the present time that for every trained, efficient, first-class agriculturist there are half a dozen first-class opportunities for service. There was a time when such men left us for the great republic to the south. We are now drawing such back, and what we have we hold.

## TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL WORK.

It is proposed by the Bill to strengthen all lines of instructional and educational work. The scientific researches of the past half century have revolutionized agriculture, but the full benefits of those researches have not reached the great multitude who to-day till the fields in Canada. Too often the spectacle is witnessed, pathetic and pitiful, of ceaseless, honest, laborious toil, bringing distress of mind and body, and, even after long years, bringing no reward, solely and simply from lack of knowledge and misdirected energy. It has been finely said that:

“Where mind co-operates with muscle we get a new kind of man, as compared with the empirical drudge who digs and digs from childhood to death without an idea to redeem his labour and without a hope to realize the solvency of his life. The soil is a great educator. Let men know

the reason governing their effort upon it, and every morning breaks brighter; a new motive power enlightens life and the community moves to a higher destiny."

Help given in an educational direction will not only mean better farming, but better farmers and better and happier men and women. The particular form such assistance may take may vary with the special needs and conditions in each province. It will embrace the increasing of the efficiency and equipment of our agricultural colleges; the establishment of agricultural schools, of dairy and horticultural schools, of short courses in agriculture; the initiation of agricultural teaching in the public schools and work by travelling or located qualified instructors. It might well include the valuable educational work carried on by means of demonstration trains, training of teachers in nature study and the invaluable work of domestic science concerned with the women and girls of our communities, whose influence will always constitute one of the most potent forces in solving the problems we are considering.

#### CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF TEN YEARS.

We restrict the purposes of the Bill to education because by so doing we get at the true basis of successful production. As any educational work to be effective must be continuous, we propose to make the policy cover a period of ten years. From the Consolidated Revenue Fund it is proposed to set apart the sum of ten million dollars to be expended over the period mentioned. \$700,000 will be allotted the first year and this amount will be increased by \$100,000 annually until 1917, from which year until 1923 \$1,100,000 will be provided yearly. The gradual expansion and growing equipment of the provincial organizations will be met in this way more helpfully than by starting at the million mark.



## ACCORDING TO POPULATION.

Speaking broadly, we have adhered to the principle of division on a population basis. The slight modifications of this principle which have been adopted will, I trust, meet the approval of the House. Thus, in the first place, we set apart \$20,000 a year to be divided between such veterinary colleges as grant degrees and come up to a required standard. We do this on the ground that from the character of our federal veterinary work, and for the reason that students to these institutions are drawn from all provinces in Canada, they may be regarded as having a fairly national complexion. On this I shall speak further when the Bill is before the House.

In addition to this \$20,000, we propose to allot to each province, regardless of population, the sum of \$20,000. It has been urged—not without some reason, that special consideration should be shown to those provinces whose rural population is of large proportions, whose sources of revenue are limited and whose agricultural development greatly needs stimulation.

I might take the far eastern and far western provinces as examples: Prince Edward Island is purely agricultural with no lands, minerals or timber to draw on for revenue. The incessant call of the West has resulted in a continual drain on its population and agricultural development is a matter of the greatest importance. In the case of British Columbia we have a new province of immense area, small as yet in population, only just starting to develop her resources, and where the cost of living is perhaps higher than in any other portion of our Dominion. I might touch the case of other provinces, but the arguments will suffice for the present and we feel there is justification for the step proposed.

With the exceptions mentioned, the amounts allotted will then be divided in proportion to the population, and on the basis of the Bill the provinces will share as follows:

	1913	Yearly Increase	1917-23
Prince Edward Island...	\$ 26,529.85	\$ 1,306	\$ 31,753.73
New Brunswick.....	44,509.93	4,902	64,117.87
Alberta.....	46,094.95	5,219	66,970.91
British Columbia.....	47,334.76	5,467	69,202.57
Manitoba.....	51,730.05	6,346	77,114.09
Nova Scotia.....	54,288.45	6,858	81,719.21
Saskatchewan.....	54,296.29	6,859	81,733.32
Quebec.....	159,482.40	27,896	271,068.32
Ontario.....	195,733.32	35,147	336,319.98

It is provided that if in any year any province is not prepared to use all its grant the unused remainder shall be held by the Dominion for future use by that province, or until such time as it can make a good claim, or show good cause for its payment. If from lack of educational machinery, or for any other reason, any province is not able to submit a satisfactory scheme, the Federal Government would be prepared to formulate one for such province's assent.

When at Confederation the Dominion Government took over the main sources of revenue from the provinces it was deemed right to pay to the provinces such cash subsidies as would fairly enable them to carry on their internal administration in respect to education, construction of roads and other matters of local concern. These subsidies have, as the House knows, been increased in recent years and their expenditure has been left entirely to the provinces. In this case we propose a further step, and, while observing a proper constitutional relationship, we propose to exercise a reasonable Dominion supervision over the expenditures which are made possible by a grant voted by Parliament through this Bill. There will be a careful consideration of the agreements to be entered into, and inspection of the work done, and a full report made to Parliament of the whole matter.



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WITH PROVINCES.

We have in mind a general conference each year with representatives from the provinces in order that the work may be co-ordinated, and so avoid duplication between federal and provincial departments. We have in mind also development of a publications office by means of which the people of Canada will be kept continually informed as to agricultural work in progress in all parts of the country. In these ways something like a real co-operation between the Dominion and the provinces will be achieved, provincial rights will be safeguarded and sufficient control will be exercised by this Government over the federal grants. As we earnestly desire to treat this whole matter from an economic and national standpoint, eliminating party politics and party advantage, so also we look to the governments of the provinces to take the same stand and to work with the same ends in view. It is obvious that the success of the whole scheme is dependent on the spirit in which it is approached and operated.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, although the sum provided for under this Bill may at first seem large—and perhaps is sufficiently large for the initiation of the work, it is none too large for the work to be done. If the provinces co-operate with us, as we hope and as we have every reason to expect, it is my conviction that, considering the magnitude of the task, its nature, and considering also the growth of this country, it will be found in a few years that this appropriation will be unequal to the demand. While that may be left for future consideration, I would like to state clearly at this time that I believe this House will, in the not far distant future, be prepared to supplement this appropriation by still larger amounts, and that when that time comes the House will consider it from the same standpoint that I ask you now to consider it, viz., that by such a measure we are providing funds for effective and lasting development along right lines of our greatest national asset.

## SYMBOLS OF NATIONAL STRENGTH.

On this side of the House and on that are many men who either know by experience the farm life of our country, or whose fathers or forefathers have toiled on the land. It is well for all to keep in vision that solitary figure in the distant furrow, that stooped form tending the hearth of the isolated home—symbols and types of our national necessities, our national virtues and our national strength. Here between these four walls we sit year by year making the laws of our country. We do it, amidst much strife, sometimes ill, sometimes well, too often attaching importance and permanence to that which is neither permanent nor important. Our laws would be better—there would be less bitterness in our strife—if we were oftener moved by a sincere desire to lighten the work and brighten the lives of those who, in the silence and solitude of the fields and woods, are doing the foundation work of our common country.











